

Georgia Institute of Technology

Celebrating Georgia Tech-Lorraine's First 25 Years with the GTL CommunityG.P. "Bud" Peterson, President May 27, 2016

On May 27, 2016, President and Mrs. Peterson joined faculty, staff, students, local academic partners, and government representatives in Metz, France to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Georgia Tech-Lorraine. Included in the speech were examples of Georgia Tech-Lorraine's success, its continued importance to Georgia Tech as an institution, and the vital role of global engagement. (NOTE: As written— not necessarily as delivered.)

Good morning and thank you Yves for that introduction. And thank you to all of you for being here.

Before I begin, I would like to thank the local institutional and government officials, as well as our key academic partners, who are present here today. We are so appreciative for their strong support of GT-Lorraine and are honored they have joined us to celebrate this occasion. With us today are:

- President Bohl of Metz-Metropole
- Mayor Gros of Metz
- Vice-President Lavergne of the Department of Moselle
- President Mutzenhardt of the University of Lorraine
- And the Directors of two key Engineering Schools working closely with us:
- Director Szafnicki of SUPELEC
- Director Takadom of ENSAM

And, I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to the Consul General of the United States in Strasbourg, Ms. Amy P. Westling.

We are delighted to be with you to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Georgia Tech-Lorraine! The success of Georgia Tech – Lorraine is a source of great pride for us. Almost 5,800 students have spent a semester or more at GTL over the last 25 years, and its continued success is a shining example of the Institute's vision in action, as we "expand our global footprint and influence," "graduate good global citizens," and position ourselves "among the most highly respected technology-focused learning institutions in the world."

Today, we celebrate the extraordinary past and present achievements of our Georgia Tech-Lorraine colleagues, and plan for an even brighter future.

Georgia Tech-Lorraine started with a handful of graduate students and faculty. But this year more than 600 students will study at Georgia Tech-Lorraine. Over the years more than 200 professors from Atlanta have taught here in Metz. Growth in enrollment is strong and bodes well for the future!

A dozen years ago, Georgia Tech made a strategic decision to develop a research program at Georgia Tech-Lorraine in close partnership with CNRS. Our joint international laboratory, the UMI, is today a resounding success, with top-notch research attracting funding and producing award-winning doctoral students. A good example of that is the OpenLab of Peugeot PSA.

And in terms of commercialization and innovation, we are proud to have recently joined with our partners to launch the Institut Lafayette, a world-class facility in optoelectronics. While it is still young, I believe that with proper support, it can have an incredible impact here in Lorraine. A really neat example of the cross fertilization that we see here is that our I-Corps (Innovation Corps) program is now available here in Metz.

So whether it is education, research, or innovation, Georgia Tech is quite present here in Metz.

It's been an exciting year to say the least, with Georgia Tech students and faculty making a splash in national and global news, and that includes you, our GTL faculty, staff and students.

Georgia Tech is known around the globe – and when you ask people about us, they will most likely mention engineering, and that's fair as Georgia Tech's engineering college is certainly world renown, a fact we are exceedingly proud of. But, it is no surprise to anyone here that there has been another college making quite a bit of noise, and that is our College of Sciences.

In September, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA, held a live TV and web broadcast announcing the discovery of water on Mars, led by Georgia Tech scientists, both PhD students. Along with NASA officials, **Lujendra Ojha**, who led the study, participated in the live broadcast from right here in Metz. She was joined by **Mary Beth Wilhelm**, a NASA researcher and study co-author, who took part from NASA's Ames Research Center in California. There were more than 3,000 media stories around the world.

And then, just a couple of months ago, it was announced that a global research group from across the US and 14 other countries, including a number of Georgia Tech faculty and students became the first to observe gravitational waves, ripples in the fabric of space-time that arrived at the earth from a cataclysmic collision of two black holes. The announcement confirmed a major prediction of Albert Einstein's 1915 general theory of relativity and opens an unprecedented new window onto the cosmos. Two Georgia Tech College of Sciences faculty members and their team of 10 postdoctoral fellows, graduate, and undergraduate students are part of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration group that announced the finding. Associate Professor Laura Cadonati chaired the Georgia Tech contingent. It was viewed online more than 2.4 million times in the first few days after the announcement.

We are proud of the exciting education, research and discovery happening at Georgia Tech and are honored that Georgia Tech continues to be a place where people want to be. And, the world continues to take notice.

Universities, companies and governments from around the world continuously look to Georgia Tech in their efforts to grow science, business, and technology, as well as literacy about these fields. Georgia Tech partners internationally on everything from research and teaching to logistics. The Institute has more than 1,100 academic faculty, 25,000 students, and 150,000 alumni living and working around the world, including here in France, which is the number one ranked country of alumni residence outside of the United States.

During the past two decades, Georgia Tech has grown into one of the world's most globalized technological universities, with collaborations in more than 80 countries, and institutional partnerships in more than 30 countries. Along with Georgia Tech - Lorraine, we have global centers in China, Singapore, Costa Rica, Panama, and Mexico.

On average, 52% of each graduating class at Georgia Tech has spent a semester or more abroad, studying, or doing research or internships. This is remarkable by US standards (*far above the national average of 14 percent for American colleges and universities*)

52% is indeed a remarkable feat, but even with those numbers, there are economic limitations on students wishing for an international experience. Tonight, I will have the opportunity to speak with alumni and friends of Georgia Tech about the Challenge Scholarship. Four years ago when the Challenge Scholarship was established, I was more than proud to seed \$100,000 out of my budget, and I am delighted that our alumni responded in kind and the scholarship is now fully endowed.

Opportunities like the Challenge Scholarship remove barriers, opening up opportunities for educational experiences that cannot be replicated in any other way than living, working, and learning abroad. These experiences are invaluable, so we will continue to seek ways to strengthen the fund going forward so that we can impact the educational experience of as many Georgia Tech students as possible. A strengthened Challenge Scholarship means more students who need financial aid to cross from Europe to Atlanta, or from Atlanta to Metz, are able to do so.

That includes students like Samy Hocine, who is currently here studying at GTL. Last year, we began awarding the scholarships and Samy was the first recipient. He graduates soon with his MS in Mechanical Engineering and is a great example of the importance of global engagement and educational experiences abroad.

When students like Samy graduate, they not only have a degree from a top research university; they also have experience learning, working and living alongside some of the best and the brightest students from throughout the world, and are uniquely prepared for success in an increasingly global environment.

We know that top employers are seeking college graduates with international experience and intercultural skills. A survey of Georgia Tech alumni a few years back found that 60% hold positions where they frequently work with multinational groups. We must ensure that each graduate is increasingly aware of the challenges of sustainability and can act to positively impact the world around them in any complex, multisystem, multi-stakeholder, and multicultural setting. Working, studying and researching abroad in these settings is the optimal environment for ensuring that we are doing just that.

As our first and oldest international program, Georgia Tech – Lorraine has been our largest vehicle for those educational, social and cultural learning experiences. Twenty-five years has resulted in significant and sustainable partnerships with European R&D and institutions of higher education in France and Europe in general, strategic alliances with companies, and governmental and nongovernmental organizations that align with our mission, including our partnerships with CNRS and Institut Lafayette, our strategic alliance with CentraleSupélec, with ENSAM ParisTech, and others.

These important collaborations are the result of a common interest in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in today's economy, and the alliance serves as a catalyst to strengthen existing links of cooperation in academia, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The importance of strong involvement in the internationalization of higher education and research to prepare our students for professional careers in a globally connected world is what drives Georgia Tech.

I want to again thank the local government here for their support of GTL. Our current collaborations have been a great beginning and certainly set the stage for the next phase of our alliance. As a testament to our shared vision and focus on research, teaching, and improving the world through technological advances, we look forward to more collaboration. There are truly great things to come.

I want to thank you again for being here this morning. Have a wonderful afternoon and Go Jackets!